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LETTER DATED 16 JUNE 1998 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the recent development of events in Abkhazia, Georgia.

May I ask your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) George VOLSKI
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

[Original: Russian]

Statement issued on 14 June 1998 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia expresses its extreme indignation in connection with the developments in the Gali district of Abkhazia, Georgia, where the ethnic cleansing of the Georgian population is continuing openly.

On the morning of 13 June of this year, the so-called Abkhaz militia forces conducted a bandit raid on the village of Gagida. The population of the village was driven out into the streets, and their homes were pillaged and burned down; one resident was killed and five were taken hostage. Many people, including elderly persons and women, were severely beaten.

According to information available as of today, in the Gali district, 1,731 houses have been burned down and industrial installations have been destroyed. Their construction and rebuilding had been made possible, thanks to the untiring assistance provided by international humanitarian organizations and considerable material expenditures.

This latest punitive operation conducted by the Abkhaz separatist leaders is yet another indisputable confirmation of their intention to wreck the negotiation process under way and frustrate the efforts of the world community to salvage from the crisis that has arisen the process of settling the conflict peacefully.

The Government of Georgia is taking all the measures within its power to avert a resumption of armed confrontation, which is being increasingly provoked by the Abkhaz authorities and is creating a real threat to peace and stability in the region.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia expresses its confidence in the ability of international political organizations, first of all, the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States, to assess the situation that has come about and take urgent measures.